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Leading learning and skills

Understanding the impact of the Adult Learning Grant

Learning and Skills
Council

July 2008

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

Appendix B: About us

This output is based on and comprises both your input and information sourced from third parties (which may include public data sources). Whilst we will use all reasonable care and skill in the collection and collation of this output we cannot warrant or guarantee the accuracy of the output. You acknowledge that outputs which use empirical data and/or statistical data and/or data modelling techniques cannot be taken as a guarantee of any particular outcome and are not intended to be the sole basis of your business decisions. Our standard terms of business apply.



Approved by: Dr Fiona Harris
Position: Associate Director
Date: 31st July 2008

Executive summary

Introduction

- This report presents the findings of an impact assessment of the Adult Learning Grant (ALG). The focus of the research is on recipients' participation, retention, attainment and progression as a result of the receipt of ALG financial support. The research was conducted by Experian and Ipsos MORI on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) between April and June 2008.
- ALG pilots began in 2003 and year on year the pilot has been expanded until full national roll out was achieved in September 2007. Since the launch of the pilot ALG in 2003, growth in the number of ALG awards has been substantial, from 2,400 in 2003/04 to 12,400 in 2006/07, and projected to reach 30,000 by 2010. Growth reflects a greater take up within the target group and increasing success rates of applications, the expansion of ALG to a greater number of regions and the removal of upper age restrictions in the early years of the pilot.
- The ALG is intended to help low income adults (aged 19 or over) studying full time (more than 450 guided learning hours a year) for their first full Level 2 or Level 3 with the costs associated with learning. Recipients of the ALG receive £10, £20 or £30 per week depending on their financial situation.
- The research approach consisted of a review of relevant literature, including previous ALG research and LSC datasets, and a quantitative survey of learners in receipt of the ALG in the final year of the pilot (2006/07).
- A stratified sample of 4,000 ALG recipients for the learner survey was taken from the LSC's database and just over 100 interviews were conducted per region. In the analysis, the data was weighted by region, gender and age to match the profile of all ALG recipients in 2006/7. In total, 1,000 ALG recipients were interviewed.

Characteristics of ALG learners

- The majority (82 per cent) of ALG recipients are aged under 25 and just over half are female. Four-fifths are White.
- A significant proportion (78 per cent) of ALG recipients live with their parents, either rent free or paying rent, although there is considerable variation by the gender and age of the learner.
- Over a third of learners were solely in work before starting their course whilst almost a half were previously in education, although with variation by learner age, ethnicity and disability.
- Around half (52 per cent) of recipients are combining work with study. Most (86 per cent) of these learners have an annual income of less than £10,000, although income does differ quite significantly according to the age of the learner.
- Two-thirds have or will make a payment towards their course (in the form of course, registration and exam fees).
- The ALG is often accompanied by, or follows on from, other forms of financial support, as 61 per cent of ALG recipients previously received another form of grant or fund, primarily the EMA, help with travel costs and hardship payments.

- The majority (80 per cent) of learners receiving the ALG are at Level 3, and the remaining 20 per cent at Level 2. As these are first full level qualification, the prior attainment of ALG recipients is predominantly at Level 1 and Level 2 respectively.
- Two-fifths of learners are enrolled on BTEC courses, predominantly in Arts, Media and Publishing. Award/Certificate/Diploma in Health, Public Services and Care; Access to HE; and NVQs in Retail and Commercial Services were the other most common types of qualifications.

Learner decision making

- A wide range of reasons were given for why ALG learners are doing their course, focused on the perceived benefits to their skills and career. Nine in ten respondents cited *to gain new skills and to develop your career*. Other frequent responses were *to help you get a job* (77 per cent) and *to get more satisfaction from your work* (64 per cent).
- Financial considerations were important to around half of learners (52 per cent) in their decision making process. This was particularly the case for older learners and learners in employment who have more financial commitments to consider.
- First awareness of ALG is primarily through dedicated staff: school or college staff; and college, Connexions and Next Step careers advisors. However, other sources are important for certain learners, for example the media (internet, posters/leaflets) to older learners (25 plus). By contrast, younger learners (under 25) and BMEs are more likely to receive information on the ALG from personal contacts.
- A significant proportion (76 per cent) of learners who receive the ALG learned about it after they had decided to do the course. This proportion rises to 80 per cent of BMEs. Conversely, those with a learning difficulty are most likely to have found out about the ALG before beginning their course.

Experiences and additionality

- The ALG has a positive influence on the decision to apply for a course for around half of those learners with a prior knowledge of ALG. Fifty-two per cent of learners that had heard of the ALG before deciding on their course said they were influenced either *a great deal* or *a fair amount* by the fact they could apply for an ALG compared to 48 per cent for whom there was *not very much* or *no influence*. The influence is more positive amongst BME learners, with 56 per cent reporting a positive influence.
- The availability of ALG enabled 16 per cent of recipients to start their course earlier. ALG has marginally more influence on the timing decisions of BMEs, learners at level 2 and learners with a learning difficulty where 20 per cent, 22 per cent and 24 per cent respectively report that ALG enabled an earlier course start.
- If they had not received the ALG 15 per cent of recipients would have dropped out of their course and 11 per cent would not have gone ahead with their course. The primary impact, however, is on the decision to study full time with 38 per cent saying they would have studied part time rather than full time if they had not received ALG.

- Over a third of ALG recipients in study chose to do a full qualification compared to part modules/units because this qualified them to receive the ALG. The ALG also influenced 21 per cent of learners on which level of qualification to choose and 17 per cent of ALG recipients changed their choice of what subject to study because of the ALG.
- Eighty-four per cent of current ALG recipients plan to do further learning in the future and, if progressing from Level 2 to Level 3, 82 per cent will apply for ALG when doing so. Future uptake of learning and the ALG is encouraged by the positive experiences of doing the current course – 91 per cent said their recent experiences have influenced their intention to do future learning.
- ALG recipients have higher achievement rates compared to the all learner average (81 per cent compared to 69 per cent).
- ALG recipients report their key outcomes from their learning are *a qualification* (93 per cent), *skills that will look good to future employers* (86 per cent) and *skills to do a better job in the future* (85 per cent).

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Introduction

About the Adult Learning Grant (ALG)

The ALG is one of a number of learner support mechanisms¹ designed to enable more learners to participate, and to remain, in learning by removing financial barriers. The ALG pilot was announced as part of the 2003 Skills Strategy and it is intended to help low income adults (aged 19 or over) studying full time (more than 450 guided learning hours a year) for their first full Level 2 or Level 3 with the costs associated with learning. Recipients of the ALG receive £10, £20 or £30 per week depending on their financial situation. ALG pilots began in 2003; year on year the pilot has been expanded until full national roll out was achieved in September 2007. This study accordingly looks at ALG recipients in the final year of the pilot.

The ALG supports the overarching goal of the LSC 'to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to ensure we have a workforce that is of world-class standards'. Specifically, the ALG supports the strategic targets of the LSC clearly stated in the Annual Statement of Priorities, and fits most strongly within the 2008/09 LSC priority 1 – Creating Demand for Skills (Raising demand among adults) with the objectives of increasing participation, improving retention and attainment at Levels 2 and 3, and encouraging progression to HE or skilled employment.

Understanding the impact of the ALG

This report presents the findings of an impact assessment of the Adult Learning Grant (ALG). The focus of the research is on recipients' participation, retention, attainment and progression as a result of the receipt of ALG financial support. The research was conducted by Experian and Ipsos MORI on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) between April and July 2008.

Specifically the research:

- examines the effect of the ALG on recipients' decisions to participate in learning;
- examines the impact of the ALG on learner choice in terms of qualification level/type/subject, mode of study and working patterns;
- assesses additionality i.e. considers whether the ALG attracts new learners and raises achievement rates;
- measures the impact of the ALG on participation, retention and attainment amongst the eligible population; and
- determines any linkages between the ALG and other forms of learner support.

¹ ALG, EMA, Care to Learn, Career Development Loans, School Sixth Form and Sixth Form College childcare, support for residential learning, transport and hardship.

Report format

The contents of the report are:

Chapter 1: a brief review of the key findings from previous ALG studies.

Chapter 2: an overview of the research methodology.

Chapter 3: findings with respect to the general profile of ALG recipients.

Chapter 4: learner reasons for undertaking learning, the role the ALG has had on influencing learner decisions and whether the ALG influenced learners during their learning journey.

Chapter 5: additionality and learner benefits created by the ALG.

Chapter 6: conclusions based on the research findings.

1 Prior ALG research and evaluation outcomes

1.1 An introduction to additionality terminology

Where possible we compare findings directly with previous studies. For example this is possible with specific questions included in research such as:

“Without ALG would you have probably / definitely not gone ahead with your course?”

These questions broadly help us understand ALG additionality by simply comparing the responses for consistency. However, the nature of the questioning and the learner support mechanism means that it actually creates different types of additionality in priority areas. The varying types of additionality which we focus on estimating in more detail are listed below:

- Participation
 - Scale additionality – has the ALG created additional participation?
 - Timing additionality – has the ALG enabled learners to enter learning earlier than they might have without this support?
- Retention
 - Scale additionality – has the ALG ensured that people remain in learning?
- Attainment
 - Scale additionality – through the above has the ALG led to learners achieving measurable outcomes i.e. a qualification?
 - Timing additionality – has the ALG enabled learners to attain a qualification earlier by undertaking learning full-time instead of part-time?

To enable simple interpretation any scale additionality will simply be referred to as ‘additionality’ and timing additionality will be referred to as ‘timing additionality’.

1.2 Key previous research findings

There have been a number of LSC learner support mechanism evaluations undertaken which wholly or partly included assessments of additionality. Those which are used for comparison throughout this report include the:

- Additionality Studies of ALG recipients (2005, 2006, 2007, unpublished);
- Evaluation of the Adult Learning Grant Cohort 1 (Waves1 & 2) (September 2006);
- Evaluation of the Adult Learning Grant Cohort 2 (Wave 1) (October 2006);
- Evaluation of the Adult Learning Grant Cohort 2 (Wave 2) (July 2007).

This section presents findings from previous ALG studies, and the background for the current research study. Please note that whilst we compare the findings of this research with the outputs of previous work, there are variations in survey methodology including questionnaire sampling, design and questionnaire routing that mean we cannot be sure we are comparing like with like.²

The extent to which the ALG has generated additional participation has varied between 2005 and 2007. In the 2005 additionality study ALG had its greatest impact with 13 per cent of learners stating that they would not have gone ahead with their course without financial support. This fell to 9 per cent in the 2006 study although an increase to 11 per cent was found in 2007. It is also important to place these figures in context with those learners that actually chose their course before they heard of the ALG. However the findings suggest that participation additionality is between 9 per cent and 13 per cent.

The impact of the ALG on learner retention has been relatively stable, with around 16 per cent reporting that ALG has deterred them from dropping out of the course, and retention rates are higher than for non-ALG learners. The ALG has also enabled learners to participate in learning (or complete learning earlier) through full-time attendance consistently. The studies of ALG recipients have also highlighted the role of the ALG on learners undertaking a full course. The findings of this research are important to understand its continuing role in this regard.

Alongside the above we know that the ALG has an important impact on final attainment. Research (2006 Cohort One) identified that 70 per cent of ALG learners achieved their qualification compared to just 56 per cent of non-ALG applicant learners. Although we will not be comparing progression findings in this report, previous Cohort One research (Wave 1 and 2) has demonstrated that learners are more likely to enter education, employment or training having progressed with ALG support than if not in receipt of ALG support.

² Original questionnaires were not made available for the purposes of this research.

2 Impact research methodology

2.1 Overview

The objectives of this research are to assess the additionality created by the ALG against the aims and objectives discussed in the introduction. To achieve this, the research approach comprised of:

- a review of relevant literature, including previous ALG research (to inform survey design and facilitate comparison of results);
- a quantitative survey of learners in receipt of the ALG;
- an analysis phase to allow consideration of results

2.2 Survey

2.2.1 Sample design

ALG recipients were drawn from the LSC's ALG recipient database for the academic year 2006/07. A stratified sample of 4,000 recipients was drawn for the survey, giving an equal number of records in each LSC region. The aim was to achieve just over 100 interviews per region to enable overall regional analysis.

However, during fieldwork around a third of sampled learners did not recall receiving an ALG during 2006/7 and had to be screened out of the survey. Subsequently, an additional 223 leads were issued in order to meet the interview targets.

In total, 1,000 ALG recipients were interviewed.

2.2.2 Fieldwork

The telephone survey was conducted by Ipsos MORI Telephone Surveys which is a member of the Interviewer Quality Control Scheme (IQCS) and has Market Research Quality Standards Association (MRQSA) quality accreditation. In accordance with this, the field supervisor listened in to at least 10 per cent of the interviews and checked the data entry on screen. All interviews were conducted using the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing system (CATI). Prior to starting fieldwork, interviewers were fully briefed by the Ipsos MORI project team. They also received full written instructions about all aspects of the survey.

An advance letter was sent to learners prior to fieldwork giving them the opportunity to opt out and/or contact the research team with any queries. Twenty-nine learners opted out at this stage.

Fieldwork took place between 23rd April and 6th May. Quotas were set for region, gender and age.

2.2.3 Sample profile and weighting

In the analysis, the data was weighted by region, gender and age to match the profile of all ALG recipients in 2006/7. Table 2.1 shows the achieved and weighted sample profiles.

A sample which is weighted is less accurate (i.e. has a larger standard error) than an unweighted sample of the same size. The effect of this weighting (the 'design effect') therefore needs to be taken into account when considering statistical reliability. In this case, the effect of weighting was minimal – the overall sample size was reduced from 1,000 to 915, as illustrated in table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Sampling

Achieved sample	Unweighted sample N	Weighted sample N	Effective N ³	Max 95% confidence intervals* (+ %)
Total	1,000	1,000	915	1.9
Region				
East Midlands	107	88	107	9.5
East of England	113	68	113	9.3
London	109	129	109	9.5
North East	112	70	112	9.3
North West	116	173	115	9.2
South East	112	137	112	9.3
South West	106	76	106	9.5
West Midlands	113	127	113	9.3
Yorkshire and the Humber	112	132	112	9.3
Gender				
Female	495	523	455	4.6
Male	505	477	463	4.6
Age				
18 to 24	813	809	744	3.6
25+	187	191	171	7.5
<i>Source: Ipsos MORI (Where weighted numbers do not sum to the total, this is due to computer rounding)</i>				

³ Effective sample sizes for subgroups do not necessarily sum to the overall effective sample size.

2.2.4 Response rates

As this is a quota survey, it is not possible to calculate a response rate in the same way as a random probability sample. Instead, a detailed breakdown of the sample supplied is presented in table 2.2. Overall, 24 per cent of the total sample issued resulted in an interview. This rises to 69 per cent based on just eligible leads.

Table 2.2: Sampling

	Total Main sample
Total sample issued	4223
Achieved interviews	1,000
Unadjusted response rate ⁴	24%
Adjusted response rate ⁵	46%
<i>Eligible sample:</i>	
Achieved interviews	1,000
Appointments	338
Respondent refusal/quit during interview	107
Total eligible sample	1,445
No reply / engaged	751
Incorrect telephone number	496
Max number of tries (dead leads)	117
Ineligible for this study	1392
Unused	16
Other ineligible (out of quota)	6
Total ineligible sample	2,778
<i>Source: Ipsos MORI</i>	

⁴ Unadjusted response rate is the number of achieved interviews over the total number of leads issued.

⁵ Adjusted response rate is the number of achieved interviews over the total number of leads issued once the ineligible and unused leads have been removed.

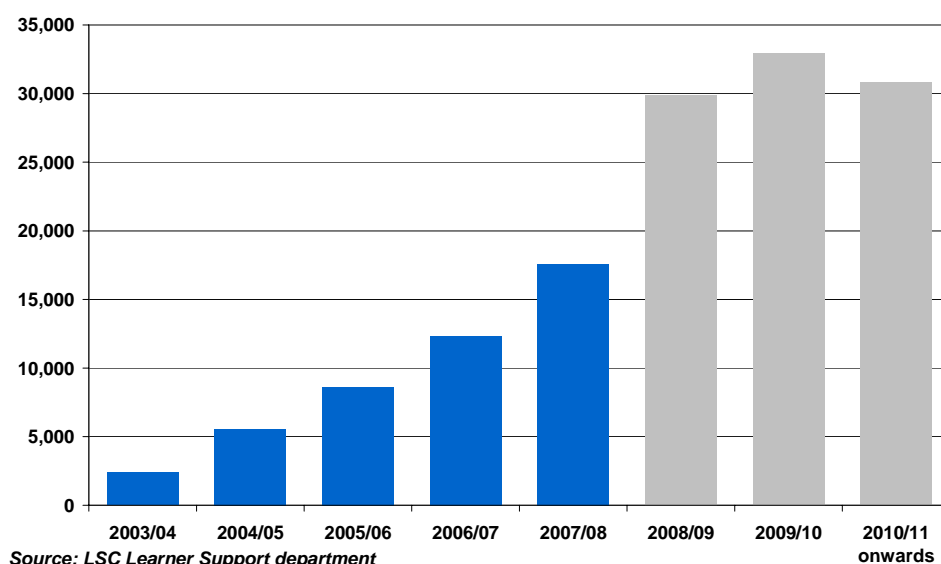
3 Characteristics of ALG learners

3.1 Overall numbers

Since the launch of the pilot ALG in 2003, growth in the number of ALG awards has been substantial, from 2,400 in 2003/04 to 12,400 in 2006/07 (figure 3.1). This trend in part reflects a greater take-up of the scheme within the target group, but also the subsequent roll-out to a greater number of regions in September 2006; the removal of upper age restrictions in the early years of the pilot; and an improvement in the success rate of applications.

The LSC anticipate that the ALG will help 30,000 adult learners in 2008/09, following full national roll-out in 2007/08,⁶ and it is estimated that numbers will be relatively consistent in subsequent years.

Figure 3.1: Actual and forecast ALG learner numbers



3.2 Demographics and background

The following section profiles the characteristics of learners in receipt of the ALG, and illustrates the differences compared to other learner groups as follows:

- 'ALG' represents all learners in receipt of the ALG in 2006/07, as the sole source or alongside other forms of support.
- 'Other learner support' represents learners not in receipt of the ALG in 2006/07 but in receipt of other forms of learner support such as EMA, Care to Learn, Career Development Loans, School Sixth Form and Sixth Form College childcare, support for residential learning, transport and hardship.
- 'No learner support' represents learners not in receipt of any form of learner support in 2006/07.
- 'Total learners' represents all learners in 2006/07, those in receipt of learner support and those not.

⁶ *Our Statement of Priorities: Better Skills, Better Jobs, Better Lives*, Learning and Skills Council, November 2007.

3.2.1 Age

The ALG is open to adults aged 19 and over.

The majority (82 per cent) of ALG learners in 2006/07 are aged under 25 (table 3.2)⁷ and learners aged over 25 make up the remaining 17 per cent.

Table 3.2: Profile of ALG learners by age (as at August 2006)
(% of column total)

	ALG	Other Learner Support	No Learner Support	Total Learners
Under 19	10%*	66%	22%	27%
19-20	54%	5%	6%	6%
21-24	18%	5%	9%	9%
25-59	17%	22%	56%	53%
60 And Over	<0.5%	1%	6%	6%
Missing Age	<0.5%	<0.5%	1%	<0.5%

* The age of the learner is recorded at the start of the academic year (August 2006) but learner support is as at the end of the academic year. Thus the 10% of ALG recipients recorded as aged under 19 in this table are learners who would have turned 19 over the course of the academic year and become recipients of the ALG.

Source: ILR (FE) 0607

Considering previous studies, over time the learner profile of ALG recipients does appear to be getting younger, despite the removal of the upper age limit in 2007. This suggests that as the grant is becoming more established it is capturing a greater proportion of the newly eligible 19 year old group than of older learners.

3.2.2 Gender

There is a relatively even split of ALG learners by gender (49 per cent male and 51 per cent female), but this is in contrast to other learner groups in table 3.3 where females account for a greater proportion than males.

Table 3.3: Profile of ALG learners by gender
(% of column total)

	ALG	Other Learner Support	No Learner Support	Total Learners
Female	51%	59%	57%	57%
Male	49%	41%	43%	43%

Source: ILR (FE) 0607

Further analysis of the ILR shows that male recipients of the ALG tend to be slightly younger than females, as males are over-represented in the 19 to 25 age group and females amongst ALG learners aged 26 to 30 years.

⁷ The profiles of other learner groups are also presented in table 3.2, although are not directly comparable as they are not necessarily subject to age restrictions.

3.2.3 Ethnicity

Of learners awarded the ALG, 80 per cent are White (table 3.4). This ethnic split is equivalent to all learners generally, but in contrast to learners in receipt of other forms of learner support where White learners account for 73 per cent.

However, the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) group is diverse and the data shows that Asian learners are over-represented amongst ALG learners while Black learners are under-represented relative to all learners, a trend consistent over a number of years.

Table 3.4: Profile of ALG learners by ethnicity (% of column total)				
	ALG	Other Learner Support	No Learner Support	Total Learners
White	80%	73%	79%	79%
Asian	11%	10%	7%	7%
Black	4%	9%	5%	6%
Mixed/Other	4%	6%	5%	5%
Not Known	1%	2%	4%	4%
Source: ILR (FE) 0607				

As with the gender split of ALG recipients compared to other learner groups, a further understanding of the underlying issues around the ethnic make-up of ALG recipients – particularly focusing on whether the ALG is affected by engagement in learning (for example, are males more likely to be encouraged to apply for the ALG or undertake courses that have greater linkages with learner support) or socio and cultural factors – will increase uptake of the ALG in future years.

3.2.4 Learning difficulty and/or disability

There appears to be a greater proportion of ALG recipients who have a learning difficulty and/or disability and/or health problem (LDD) compared to learners not in receipt of learner support, as shown in table 3.5. This encouragingly suggests that support is being taken up by learners with a particular need, although the data also shows that this group are more likely to provide information on whether or not they have a disability or learning difficulty than other learner groups.

Table 3.5: Profile of ALG learners by disability or learning difficulties (% of column total)				
	ALG	Other Learner Support	No Learner Support	All Learners
Learning difficulty and/or disability and/or health problem	15%	17%	11%	11%
No learning difficulty and/or disability and/or health problem	80%	76%	79%	79%
No information provided by the learner	4%	7%	10%	10%
Source: ILR (FE) 0607				

According to the ALG MI and ILR datasets, the most prevalent forms of LDD are dyslexia, mild learning difficulties, Aspergers Syndrome, Dispraxia and Epilepsy, although there is a relatively long and diverse list of LDD that is experienced by learners.

3.2.5 Living arrangements

Consistent with previous studies, the majority (78 per cent) of ALG recipients live with their parents, either rent free or paying rent, although there is considerable variation by the gender and age of the learner, as shown in table 3.6.

Table 3.6: Q.22. Which of the following best describes your housing arrangements?				
	(% of row total)			
	Living in a property you own or in process of buying	Living with parents rent free	Living with parents and paying rent	Paying rent to council, housing association or private landlord
Gender				
Male	3%	58%	30%	8%
Female	13%	47%	22%	16%
Age				
24 or less	1%	63%	28%	6%
25+	37%	6%	15%	36%
Ethnicity				
White	8%	50%	29%	12%
BME	7%	57%	21%	12%
Learning Difficulty				
Yes	9%	52%	28%	9%
No	8%	52%	25%	13%
Level of study				
Level 2	15%	40%	25%	18%
Level 3	6%	55%	26%	11%
Total	8%	52%	26%	12%
Source: ALG Recipients Survey 2008				

3.2.6 Employment

Table 3.7 shows the profile of learners according to their status prior to this current course. Generally over a third of learners were solely in work before enrolment whilst almost a half were previously in education.

However, the over 25s are significantly more likely to be coming into education from work (59 per cent), whilst BMEs and learners with learning difficulties are least likely (20 per cent and 27 per cent respectively).

Table 3.7: Q.2a) What was your main work status BEFORE you started this course/learning?
(% of row total)

	Solely working full-time	Solely working part-time	In education	Other*
Gender				
Male	25%	10%	52%	13%
Female	21%	18%	46%	15%
Age				
24 or less	20%	12%	58%	10%
25+	33%	26%	11%	30%
Ethnicity				
White	26%	16%	44%	13%
BME	15%	13%	57%	15%
Learning Difficulty				
Yes	19%	8%	61%	11%
No	23%	15%	47%	14%
Level of study				
Level 2	22%	18%	36%	24%
Level 3	23%	13%	52%	12%
Total	23%	14%	49%	14%

* Unemployed, looking after family/home, living/working abroad

Source: ALG Recipients Survey 2008

While engaged on learning, 44 per cent of ALG recipients state education without a job as their main status (table 3.8), 45 per cent are combining education with a job and 7 per cent are solely working (rising to 11 per cent of the 25 plus age group). The likelihood of combining work with study is greatest for White learners, at Level 3, and aged 25 plus.

Older learners and learners at Level 2 are most likely to be an 'other' status, by looking after the home or family and being unemployed respectively.

Table 3.8: Q.2b) What is your main work status now?
(% of row total)

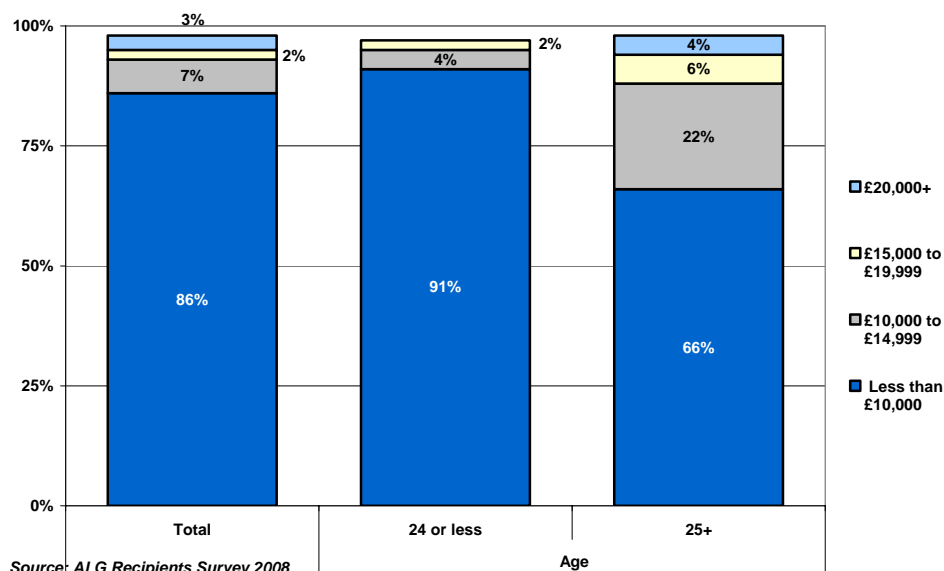
	Solely working	In education without a job	In education with a job	Other
Gender				
Male	7%	46%	42%	5%
Female	6%	42%	46%	6%
Age				
24 or less	6%	46%	45%	4%
25+	11%	36%	43%	10%
Ethnicity				
White	7%	40%	48%	5%
BME	5%	53%	37%	5%
Learning Difficulty				
Yes	8%	47%	39%	7%
No	6%	43%	46%	5%
Level of Study				
Level 2	5%	48%	38%	10%
Level 3	7%	42%	46%	4%
Total	7%	44%	45%	5%

Source: ALG Recipients Survey 2008

3.2.7 Income

The majority (86 per cent) of ALG recipients working while learning have an annual income of less than £10,000, although income does differ quite significantly according to the age of the learner, as shown in figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Q23. Current annual income (% of total)



A financial assessment is applied to ALG applicants in order to establish their ALG entitlement. Based on the income of the learner (and cohabiting partner where relevant), weekly payments of £10, £20 or £30 are made.

Reflecting the income profile of working ALG recipients, the majority (94 per cent) of learners received the maximum payment of £30 a week, and this profile has not changed greatly from previous years.

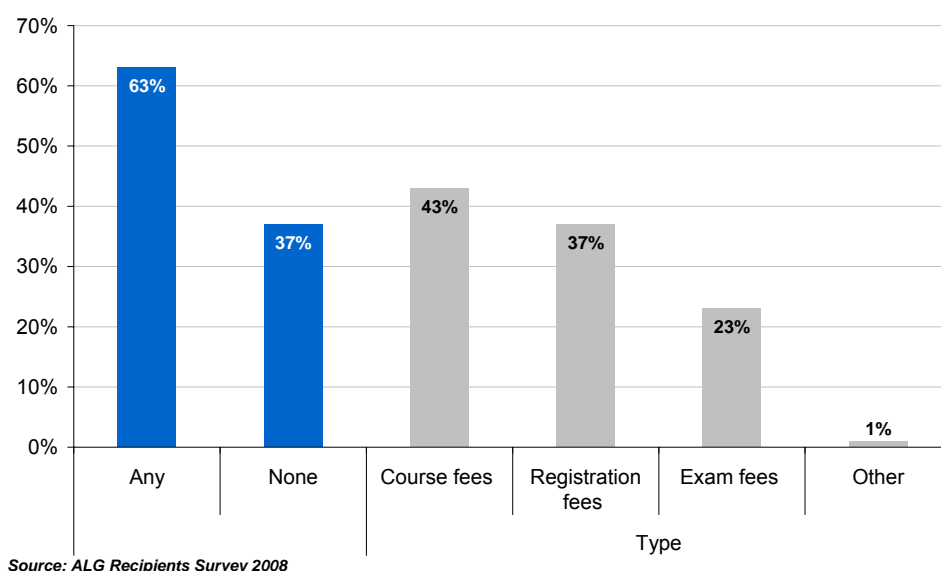
Table 3.9: Weekly grant (% of row total)		
	£10 or £20	£30
Gender		
Male	4%	96%
Female	7%	93%
Age		
24 or less	3%	97%
25+	18%	82%
Ethnicity		
White	6%	94%
BME	4%	96%
Learning Difficulty		
Yes	4%	96%
No	6%	94%
Total	6%	94%

Source: ALG Recipients Survey 2008

3.2.8 Payment for course

Figure 3.3 shows the percentage of respondents who have made a payment or will pay for the cost of their course. Almost two thirds (63 per cent) of respondents have made/intend to make a payment to their course. Course fees are the most common type of payment (43 per cent), followed by registration fees (37 per cent) and exam fees (23 per cent).

Figure 3.3: Q6. Have you paid or will you pay any of the following for this course? (% of total)



Additionally, a greater proportion of respondents have contributed towards payment for course, registration and exam fees in 2006/07 compared to previous years.

3.2.9 ALG and other learner support

Of those receiving the ALG, 61 per cent had also received some other form of grant or fund (table 3.10). The financial support that ALG learners had most likely received in the past was the EMA (43 per cent) followed by help with travel costs (19 per cent).

- By learner characteristic, those previously in education are the most likely to have received EMA (66 per cent), and those over the age of 25 the least (both findings reflect the age restrictions of the EMA).
- The highest proportion of learners receiving financial support towards the cost of childcare in addition to the ALG are those aged 25 plus.
- Thirty six per cent of learners with a learning difficulty have received help with the cost of travel to and from their place of study (compared to the average of 19 per cent) and only 27 per cent have not received any form of funding (compared to the average of 39 per cent).
- Those working prior to the current course, alongside those aged over 25 are the most likely not to have received any previous forms of grants/funds (58 and 56 per cent respectively). Conversely those previously in education are the most likely to have received funding in the past (76 per cent).

Table 3.10: Q.13. Have you ever received the following grants/funds?

(% of total, multicoded)

	EMA	Help with travel costs to and from your place of study	Hardship payments	Financial support towards the cost of childcare	Other	None /nothing
Gender						
Male	48%	16%	13%	2%	6%	39%
Female	39%	21%	14%	9%	4%	39%
Age						
24 or less	53%	19%	13%	3%	5%	35%
25+	2%	19%	19%	16%	6%	56%
Ethnicity						
White	39%	20%	12%	4%	4%	42%
BME	52%	18%	16%	5%	6%	34%
Learning Difficulty						
Yes	45%	36%	19%	8%	5%	27%
No	43%	17%	13%	5%	5%	40%
Level of Study						
Level 2	30%	16%	14%	9%	7%	45%
Level 3	46%	19%	14%	4%	5%	37%
Previous Main Activity						
Solely Working	19%	16%	9%	6%	3%	58%
In Education	66%	21%	15%	2%	6%	24%
Other	26%	20%	24%	14%	5%	39%
Total	43%	19%	14%	5%	5%	39%
Base : All recipients of the ALG in 2006/7 (915)						
* Effective Base is too small (under 50) or less than 0.5% of total						
Source: ALG Recipients Survey 2008						

When asked if ALG recipients receive other grant or funds at the same time as the ALG, this is most likely the case for financial support towards the cost of childcare and travel costs.

Almost half (43 per cent) per cent of learners who receive the ALG also received the EMA immediately prior to this. As we would expect, this percentage is highest for those previously in education who represent the youngest learners. There is also a more pronounced pattern of EMA to ALG progression for males.

3.3 Type of study

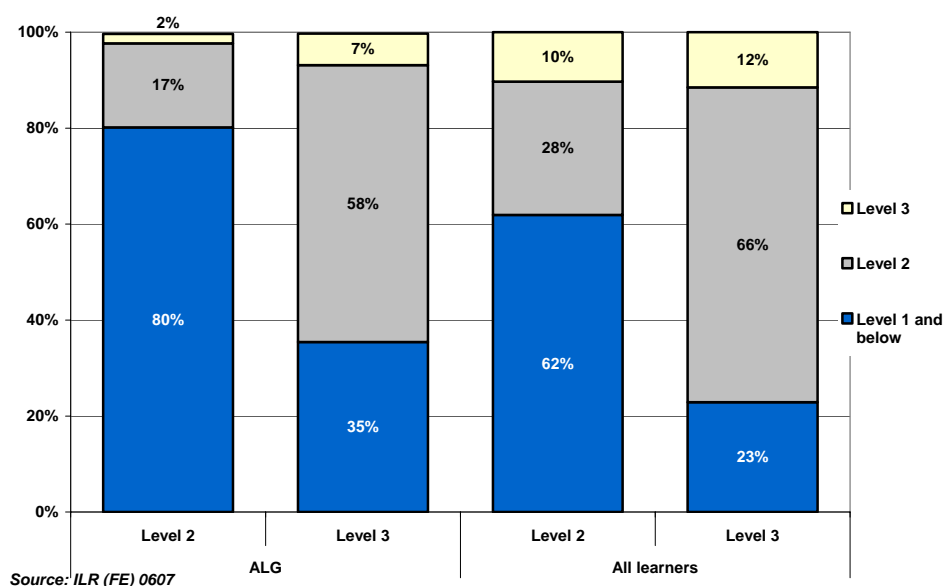
3.3.1 Qualification level

Payment of the ALG is limited to adults studying for their first full Level 2 and/or first full Level 3 qualification but the majority of learners receiving the ALG are at Level 3 rather than Level 2 (80-20 split in 2006/07).

The grant is available for 2 years, but can be extended to 3 years to encourage the progression from Level 2 to Level 3.

As payment of the ALG is limited to adults studying for their first full Level 2 and/or first full Level 3, the prior attainment of ALG recipients is predominantly at Level 1 and Level 2 respectively (as shown in figure 3.4). Comparison with all learners also shows that there is a greater concentration of learners with Level 1 and Level 2 prior qualifications amongst ALG recipients.

Figure 3.4: Profile of ALG learners by prior qualification (% of total)

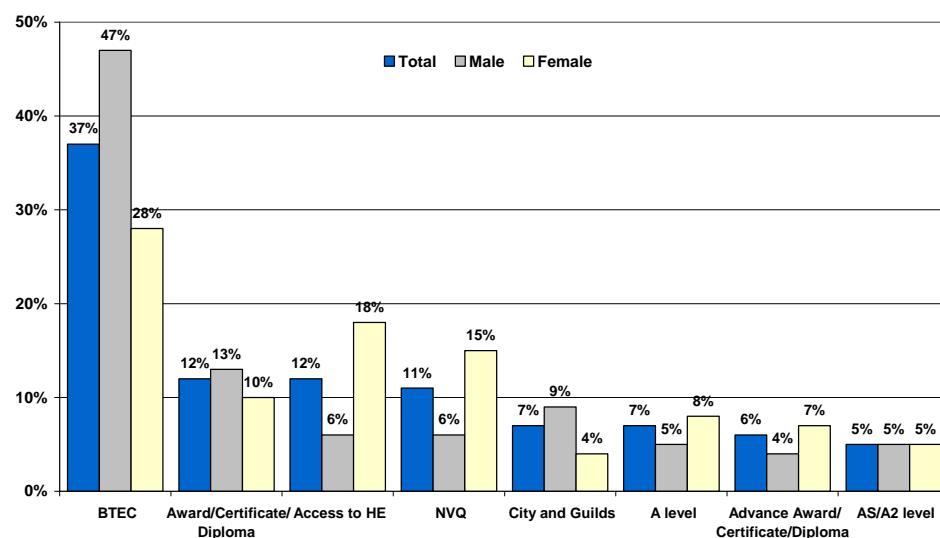


3.3.2 Qualifications

Figure 3.5 shows the profile of ALG recipients surveyed by their qualification type. BTEC, Award/Certificate/Diploma, Access to HE and NVQ were the most common types of qualifications of ALG learners, although study is predominantly BTEC qualifications.

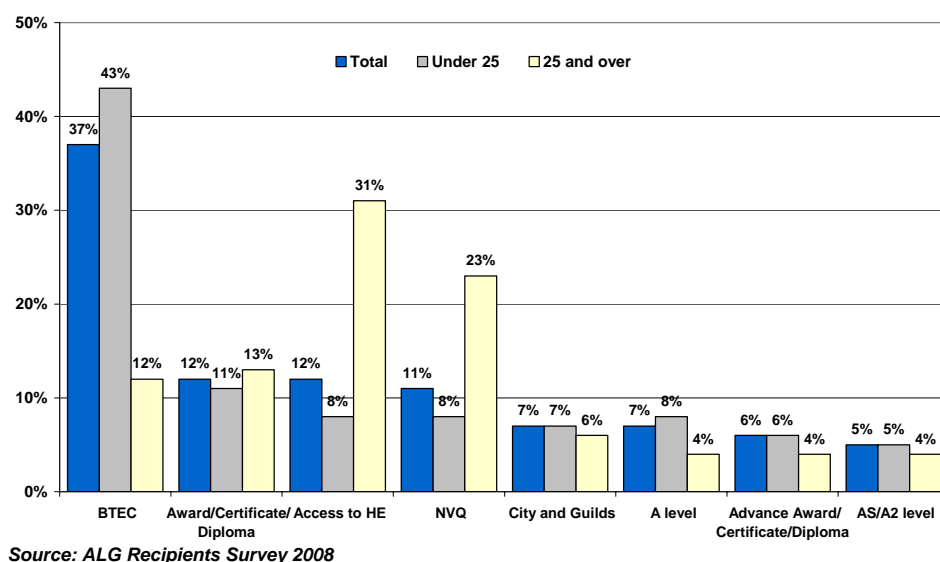
As with all learners, there are notable gender differences in the uptake of qualifications, as for example BTEC and City and Guilds are more prominent amongst male ALG recipients. In contrast, females are over-represented within NVQ and Access to HE courses.

Figure 3.5 Qualifications of ALG receivers by gender (% of total)



Age and gender are also interlinked, as for example females are more likely to be older learners (25 plus), and older learners are significantly represented on Access to HE and NVQs, whereas there is an above average proportion of learners aged under 25 enrolled on BTECs.

Figure 3.6 Qualifications of ALG receivers by age (% of total)



As is the case for all LSC funded learners, Arts, Media and Publishing is the subject where the largest proportion of learners who receive the ALG choose to study (table 3.11). Other subject areas undertaken by ALG recipients include Health, Public Services and Care, Retail and Commercial Services and Preparation for Life and Work.

A selection of the prominent qualification titles within these subject areas are:

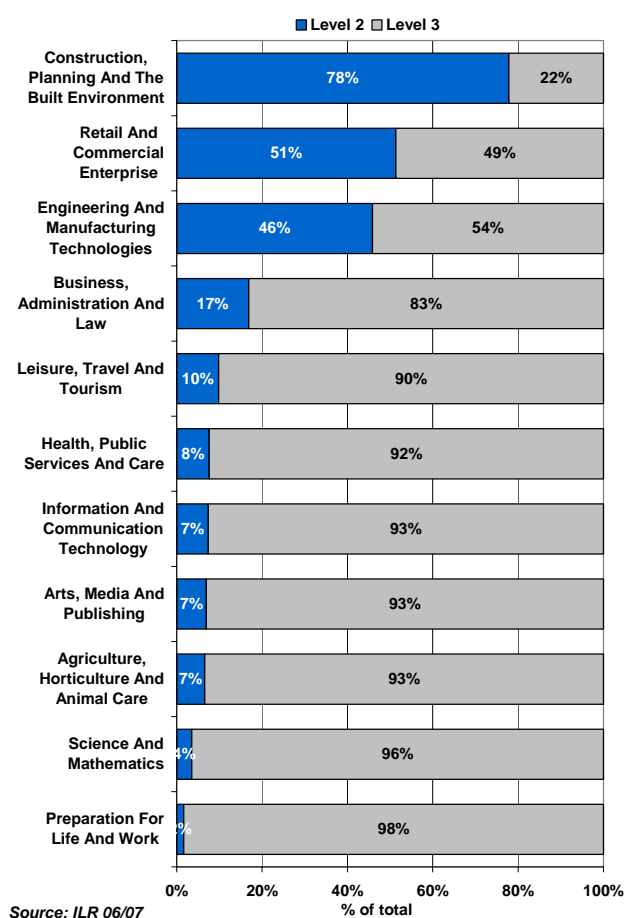
- Arts, Media and Publishing – BTEC National Diploma in Media, Performing Arts, Music Technology, Music Practice, Graphic Design, Art and Design;
- Health, Public Services and Care – Diploma in Child Care and Education; BTEC National Diploma in Early Years, Public Services, Health Studies;
- Retail and Commercial Services – NVQ in Hairdressing, Beauty Therapy;
- Preparation for Life and Work – Access to Higher Education

The most notable subject areas less prominent amongst ALG recipients compared to all learners is Construction, Planning and the Built Environment; and Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies.

Table 3.11: Profile of ALG learner aims by subject area (% of column total)				
	ALG	Other Learner Support	No Learner Support	Total Learners
Arts, Media And Publishing	19%	16%	17%	16%
Health, Public Services And Care	15%	17%	15%	16%
Retail And Commercial Enterprise	13%	16%	13%	14%
Preparation For Life And Work	10%	9%	11%	11%
ICT	7%	6%	6%	6%
Leisure, Travel And Tourism	7%	9%	8%	8%
Agriculture, Horticulture And Animal Care	6%	4%	4%	4%
Engineering And Manufacturing Tech.	6%	8%	9%	9%
Business, Administration And Law	5%	6%	5%	5%
Construction, Planning And Built E'ment	5%	6%	10%	9%
Science And Mathematics	3%	2%	1%	1%
Other	4%	1%	1%	1%
This table covers LSC funded active aims with guided learning hours of more than 450 (A10 ≠ 99, A_LIVE_B > 1 and A32>450)				
Source: ILR (FE) 0607				

Figure 3.7 illustrates the profile of ALG learners by subject area and level of learner, which shows that the greatest proportion of aims in Construction, Planning and the Built Environment; and Retail and Commercial Enterprise; and Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies are at Level 2, with the majority of aims in other subject areas at Level 3.

Figure 3.7: Profile of ALG learners by subject area and level of learner (% of total)



4 Learner decision making

4.1 Reason for doing qualification

A wide range of reasons have been given as to why ALG learners are doing their course, focused on the perceived benefits to their skills and career.

Table 4.1 details the reasons given by ALG recipients for doing the learning/qualification, which shows that nine in ten respondents cited *to gain new skills* and *to develop your career*. Other most frequent responses are *to help you get a job* (77 per cent) and *to get more satisfaction from your work* (64 per cent).

Notably learners aged under 25 are more concerned with gaining new skills, developing their career and getting a job compared to their older counterparts, who are more likely to be seeking work satisfaction or changing their career.

Logically, the highest proportion of learners looking to get help with work problems related to their health or disability is those with a learning disability.

Table 4.1: Q.3. What were your main reasons for doing this learning/qualification?

(% of total, multicode)

	To gain new skills	To develop your career	To help you get a job	To get more satisfaction from your work	To change your career	To start up your own or a family business	To get a pay rise	To help you stay in a job you might have lost if you hadn't studied	To help with work problems related to your health or a disability	Other
Gender										
Male	92%	91%	81%	65%	43%	34%	31%	20%	7%	5%
Female	90%	89%	73%	63%	46%	24%	25%	17%	7%	8%
Age										
24 or less	92%	92%	79%	62%	37%	29%	27%	19%	6%	7%
25+	87%	83%	67%	71%	74%	28%	32%	15%	9%	4%
Ethnicity										
White	91%	89%	80%	68%	49%	28%	27%	18%	7%	7%
BME	92%	93%	71%	55%	34%	27%	28%	17%	8%	6%
Learning Difficulty										
Yes	88%	86%	83%	72%	43%	36%	33%	28%	17%	9%
No	92%	91%	76%	63%	44%	28%	27%	17%	6%	6%
Level of Study										
Level 2	93%	88%	79%	69%	52%	43%	34%	25%	14%	2%
Level 3	91%	91%	76%	63%	42%	25%	27%	17%	5%	8%
Previous Main Activity										
Solely working	93%	91%	72%	75%	63%	29%	33%	16%	6%	7%
In education	91%	91%	79%	59%	28%	28%	25%	20%	7%	7%
Other	88%	86%	83%	54%	49%	30%	25%	16%	8%	4%
Total	91%	90%	77%	64%	44%	29%	28%	18%	7%	7%
<i>Source: ALG Recipients Survey 2008</i>										

4.2 Financial considerations

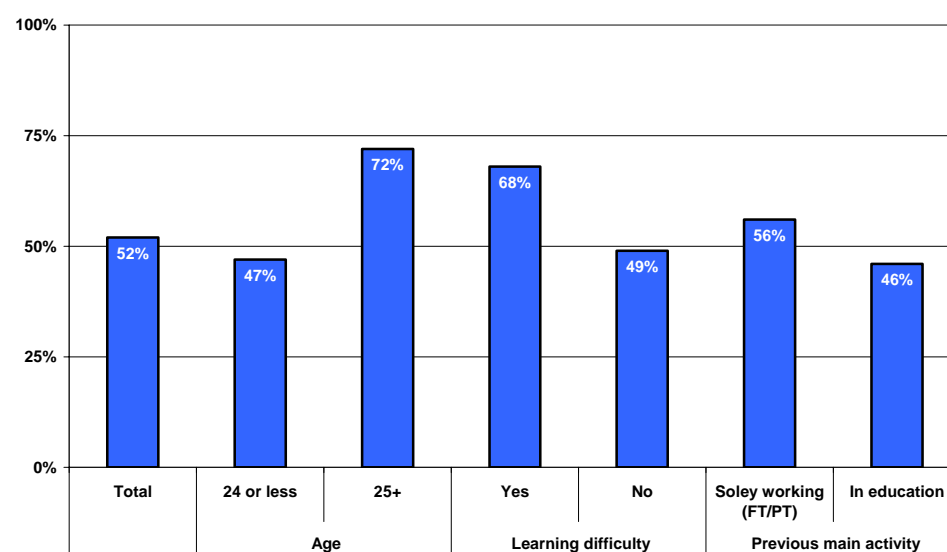
Financial considerations are important to around half of learners in their decision making process, particularly for older learners who will have more financial commitments to consider.

There is a definite split between the proportion of ALG recipients who said that financial considerations in general had a role in their decision to do the current course instead of something else (52 per cent, figure 4.1) and those respondents who said it had no influence on their decision (47 per cent).

Respondents aged 25 or over are significantly more likely to be influenced by financial considerations (72 per cent) than younger respondents (47 per cent). This could be explained due to the fact that older respondents are more likely to have more significant financial commitments.

Learning difficulties and the previous main activity of respondents also affects their decision. For example, the proportion of respondents who said that financial considerations had a role in their decision to do the current course was 56 per cent for those solely working previously, compared to 46 per cent of those who were in education.

Figure 4.1: Q5. Did financial consideration play a role in your decision to do the current course instead of something else? (% saying yes)



Source: ALG Recipients Survey 2008

4.3 Knowledge of the ALG

4.3.1 Initial information source

Learners receiving the ALG are most likely to have heard about the grant through communication with their learning provider.

The first source of information about the ALG is primarily school or college staff (58 per cent of respondents), followed by college, Connexions and Next Step careers advisors (16 per cent), friends and relatives (14 per cent) and the media in the form of internet, radio and posters/leaflets (7 per cent).⁸

The source of knowledge about the ALG differs by a learner's age, in that school and college staff and the media are a particularly important source of information for older learners, while a greater proportion of younger learners heard about the ALG through personal sources.

Furthermore, school and college staff are least important for BMEs and those previously in education, while those with learning difficulties heard about the ALG from Careers Advisors more often than other groups (20 per cent, compared to the average of 16 per cent).

Table 4.2: Q.7. Where or from whom did you first hear about ALG?
(% of row total)

	Careers advisors	School/college staff	Media	Personal
Gender				
Male	15%	56%	8%	16%
Female	17%	60%	8%	12%
Age				
24 or less	16%	56%	7%	16%
25+	13%	66%	11%	7%
Ethnicity				
White	15%	61%	8%	13%
BME	16%	52%	9%	17%
Learning Difficulty				
Yes	20%	54%	9%	13%
No	15%	59%	8%	14%
Level of Study				
Level 2	17%	63%	9%	9%
Level 3	15%	57%	8%	15%
Previous Main Activity				
Solely Working	14%	63%	8%	12%
In Education	19%	52%	9%	16%
Other	10%	67%	6%	13%
Total	16%	58%	8%	14%
Base : All recipients of the ALG in 2006/7 (915)				
* Effective Base is too small (under 50) or less than 0.5% of total				
Source: ALG Recipients Survey 2008				

⁸ A small proportion (1 per cent) of respondents stated they had first heard of the ALG through TV advert media.

These results encouragingly suggest that key influencers are promoting the ALG to their students and clients. However, to fully capture learners who are entitled to receive the grant, there remains an opportunity to use the media, particularly for the over 25s, and to broaden the availability of information to reach the family and friends of eligible learners.

4.3.2 Timing

The majority of learners who receive the ALG learnt about it after they had decided to do the course.

As shown in table 4.3, 23 per cent of ALG recipients found out about the ALG before deciding to do the course, and the remaining learners had already made their decision beforehand. This suggests that, at present, the ALG is yet to be a significant factor in the majority of eligible learners' decisions to participate in education and training.

Learners with a learning difficulty are the most likely to have found out about the ALG prior to making a course decision (34 per cent, compared to the average of 23 per cent). Conversely, learners from BME groups were the least likely to find out about the ALG before they chose to do their course (19 per cent).

By qualification type, learners on BTEC and Access to HE courses were most likely to have known about the ALG before starting their course, and (advanced) Award/Certificate/Diploma and A Level learners the least likely (not shown in table 4.3).

Table 4.3: Q.8. Did you find out about ALG before or after you decided to do this course? (% of row total)			
	Before	After	Don't Know
Gender			
Male	25%	75%	1%
Female	22%	78%	1%
Age			
24 or less	23%	77%	1%
25+	24%	75%	1%
Ethnicity			
White	25%	74%	*
BME	19%	80%	1%
Learning Difficulty			
Yes	34%	63%	3%
No	22%	78%	*
Level of Study			
Level 2	22%	77%	1%
Level 3	23%	76%	1%
Previous Main Activity			
Solely Working	22%	78%	-
In Education	24%	75%	1%
Other	24%	75%	1%
Total	23%	76%	1%
Base: All recipients of the ALG in 2006/7 (915)			
* Effective Base is too small (under 50) or less than 0.5% of total			
Source: ALG Recipients Survey 2008			

At this stage we cannot directly determine from the survey information whether the lack of prior knowledge is the result of a lack of marketing or some other reason linked to the details of the ALG. However, it is clear that certain groups, particularly BMEs, are least likely to hear about the ALG in advance of application; further evidence to uncover why this is the case would be valuable.

5 Experiences, additionality and outcomes

5.1 Influence of the ALG on applicants' decisions

5.1.1 Applying for course

An equal proportion of learners applying for the ALG were positively influenced by the knowledge they could apply for the ALG compared to learners who said they were not influenced.

Of learners who had heard of the ALG before deciding upon their course, around half (52 per cent) stated that it had affected their decision a great deal or a fair amount (table 5.1).

By learner group, BMEs are the most likely to be influenced by the ALG (56 per cent, compared to the average of 52 per cent) whilst under 25's (49 per cent) and White learners (49 per cent) were the least influenced.

Table 5.1: Q.9. To what extent was your decision to do the course influenced by the fact you could apply for an ALG?

(% of row total)

	A great deal	A fair amount	Not very much	Not at all	A great deal or fair amount of influence
Gender					
Male	16%	36%	25%	23%	52%
Female	20%	32%	24%	25%	52%
Age					
24 or less	16%	33%	27%	24%	49%
25+	*	*	*	*	*
Ethnicity					
White	16%	33%	27%	24%	49%
BME	26%	31%	22%	22%	56%
Learning Difficulty					
Yes	*	*	*	*	*
No	18%	33%	25%	24%	51%
Level of Study					
Level 2	*	*	*	*	*
Level 3	17%	31%	28%	23%	49%
Previous Main Activity					
Solely Working	13%	39%	20%	27%	53%
In Education	18%	33%	26%	24%	51%
Other	*	*	*	*	*
Total	18%	34%	24%	24%	52%
Base: All recipients of the ALG who heard of the grant before they decided to do their course (215)					
* Effective Base is too small (under 50) or less than 0.5% of total					
Source: ALG Recipients Survey 2008					

5.1.2 Timing of course

The ALG has the greatest affect on BMEs, learners at Level 2 and learners with a learning difficulty on whether to start their course earlier.

Sixteen per cent of ALG recipients reported they had started their course earlier because of the ALG, as shown in table 5.2.

There are certain groups whose timing was more likely to be affected by the ALG. The ALG allowed almost a quarter of learners with a learning difficulty and 22 per cent of those doing a Level 2 qualification to bring their course start date forward. In addition, a greater proportion of the BME group (20 per cent) were able to take their course earlier than their counterparts.

In contrast, some groups were less able to take their course earlier despite the ALG. The most noticeable are those who were solely working before the course, which is likely to reflect the greater time constraints on this group, particularly in forward planning to take time off work. Those over 25 were also less affected in terms of timing by the ALG.

Table 5.2: Q.10. Did the Adult Learning Grant enable you to start your course earlier?
(% of row total)

	Yes	No	Don't know
Gender			
Male	17%	83%	*
Female	15%	84%	1%
Age			
24 or less	17%	83%	1%
25+	13%	87%	1%
Ethnicity			
White	13%	87%	-
BME	20%	78%	2%
Learning Difficulty			
Yes	24%	76%	-
No	15%	84%	1%
Level of Study			
Level 2	22%	78%	-
Level 3	15%	85%	1%
Previous Main Activity			
Solely Working	11%	89%	1%
In Education	19%	80%	*
Other	18%	81%	2%
Total	16%	83%	1%
Base: All recipients of the ALG in 2006/7 (915)			
* Effective Base is too small (under 50) or less than 0.5% of total			
Source: ALG Recipients Survey 2008			

5.1.3 Choices

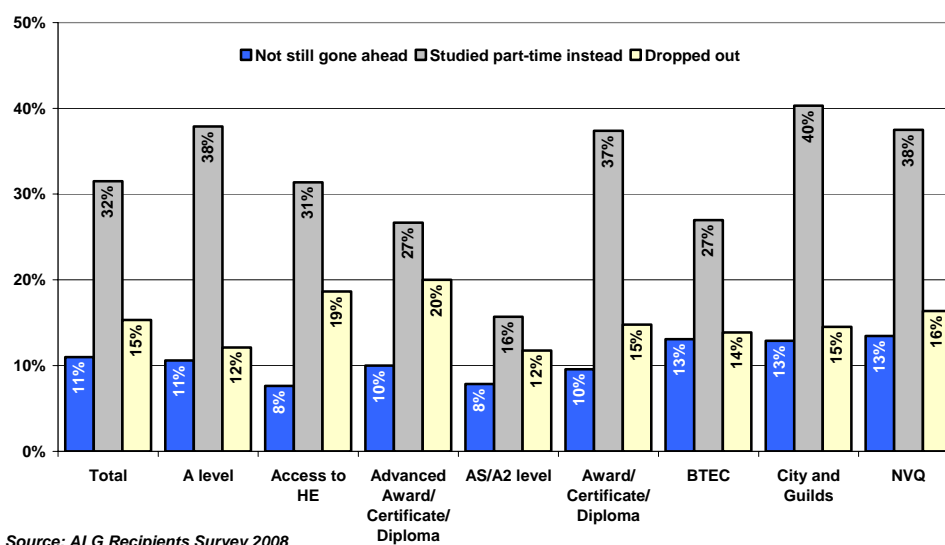
The ALG has the greatest influence on the decision between full and part-time study and whether to study a full qualification rather than in modules/units.

One-third of ALG recipients stated without the ALG they would not drop out but study part-time instead, indicating that the ALG is a key factor in a learner's decision to study full-time.

The ALG also has a moderate effect on other decisions, as for 15 per cent of learners the ALG prevented them from dropping out of the course and 11 per cent would not have gone ahead with their course without the ALG (figure 5.1).

Although there are no significant differences to report by learner characteristics, by qualification respondents who are most likely to have not gone ahead with their course if they were not in receipt of the ALG are students studying vocationally on BTECs, City and Guilds and NVQs. The influence of the ALG on full-time study is also greater for City and Guilds and NVQ learners, and additionally for A Level students.

Figure 5.1: Q11. If you had not received the Adult Learning Grant, would you have ... (% of total)



Over a third of ALG recipients in study chose to do a full qualification compared to part modules/units because this qualified them to receive the ALG, particularly influencing learners already enrolled on a Level 2 qualification and those with a learning difficulty (table 5.3).

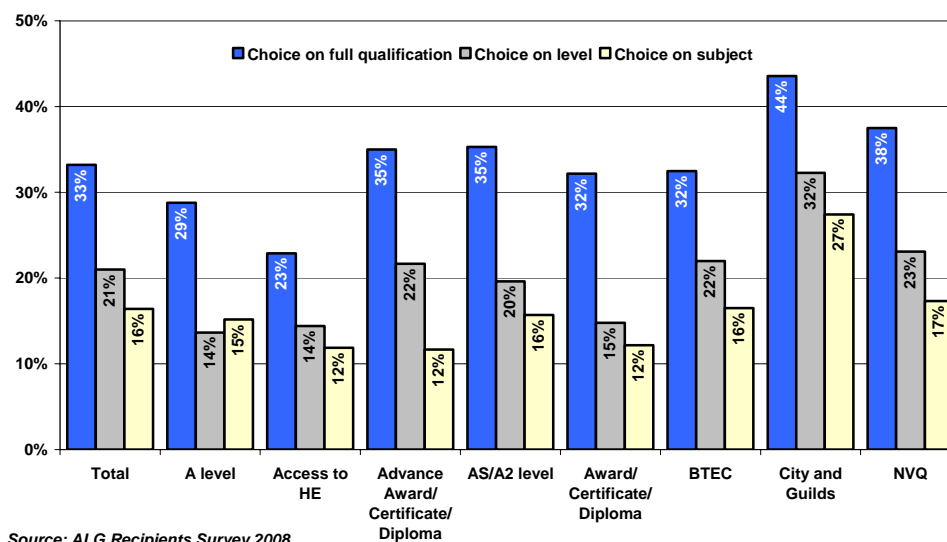
The ALG also influenced 21 per cent of learners on which level of qualification to choose. This rises to 27 per cent of the BME group and 31 per cent of learners enrolled at Level 2.

Seventeen per cent of ALG recipients changed their choice of what subject to study because of the ALG. Again, the groups most likely to make these changes are BMEs and learners at Level 2.

Table 5.3: Q.12. Thinking about your course, did the opportunity to receive the ALG influence . . . (% saying yes)			
	Your decision to study the FULL qualification rather than just part modules/units	Your choice on the level of the qualification	Your choice of what subject to study
Gender			
Male	37%	23%	19%
Female	31%	20%	15%
Age			
24 or less	35%	22%	17%
25+	29%	17%	15%
Ethnicity			
White	32%	18%	14%
BME	37%	27%	23%
Learning Difficulty			
Yes	39%	28%	20%
No	33%	20%	16%
Level of Study			
Level 2	40%	31%	23%
Level 3	32%	19%	15%
Previous Main Activity			
Solely Working	29%	16%	12%
In Education	37%	25%	20%
Other	35%	22%	15%
Total	34%	21%	17%
Base: All recipients of the ALG in 2006/7 (915)			
* Effective Base is too small (under 50) or less than 0.5% of total			
Source: ALG Recipients Survey 2008			

The influence of the ALG on course choice also depends on the qualification of study. As shown in figure 5.2, City & Guilds and NVQ learners are most likely to have been influenced in their choice of a full qualification, and the level and subject of study.

Figure 5.2: Q12. Thinking about your course, did the opportunity to receive the ALG influence.....? (% saying yes)



In summary, there is evidence that the ALG is influencing learners' choices in terms of undertaking a full qualification, level and subject, but it would be useful to understand whether this is because the individual is making course selections to meet the criteria for receiving the ALG, or as evidence that the opportunity to receive financial support through their time in learning is truly influencing individual learning choices towards priority qualifications.

5.2 Outcomes for ALG recipients

5.2.1 Early leavers

The proportion of ALG recipients retained on their course (i.e. recorded as continuing or completing the aim in the ILR) is 88 per cent, which is greater than the all learner average and the retention rate of other learner groups. Retention rates are also consistent between Level 2 and Level 3.

Table 5.4: Retention rates of ALG learner aims by level of aim (NVQ equivalent)
(% of aims retained*)

	ALG	Other Learner Support	No Learner Support	All Learners
Level 2	87%	82%	78%	79%
Level 3	88%	84%	81%	82%
All	88%	83%	79%	80%

* Number of aims continuing or completed as % total aims (ILR field A34)

This table covers LSC funded active aims with guided learning hours of more the 450 (A10 ≠ 99, A_LIVE_B > 1 and A32>450)

Source: ILR (FE) 0607

Although the sample size is too small to draw firm conclusions around early leavers, the main reasons for leaving a course early, despite receiving the ALG, are around personal and financial circumstances, and simply a change of mind. These reasons are also reflected in terms of what would have enabled learners to complete the course, as the responses were more financial support generally and better personal circumstances.

There is a relatively even split between early leavers who report that the need to earn more money played a part in their decision to leave and leavers who would have left the course earlier without ALG payments, and those who don't agree with these statements.

5.2.2 Future intentions

A relatively high proportion of current ALG recipients plan to do further learning in the future and to apply for the ALG when doing so. This is supported by the positive experiences of doing their current course.

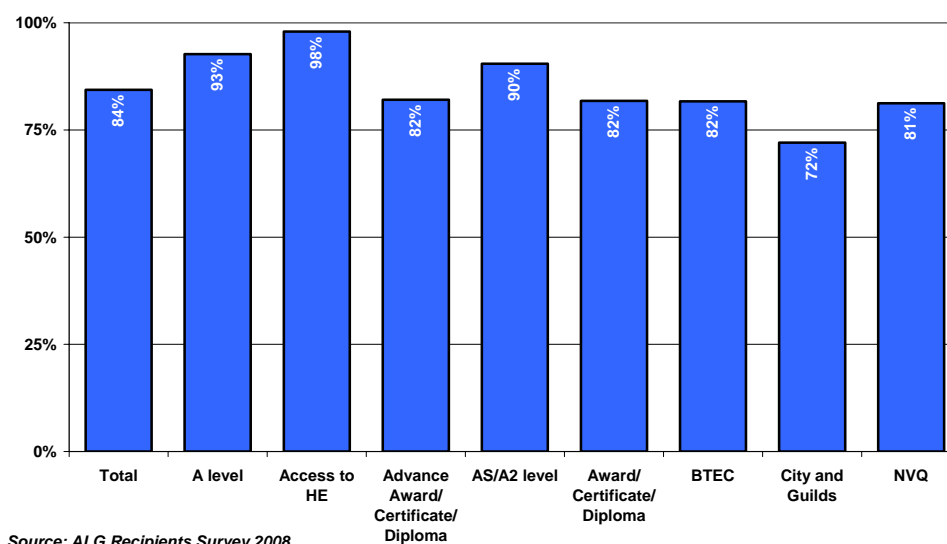
A significant majority (84 per cent) of ALG learners are considering undertaking further learning in the future (table 5.5). For some groups that percentage is even higher, for example rising to 90 per cent for the over 25s and BMEs.

The group least likely to do further learning in the future is those with learning difficulties (20 per cent), although the differential compared to the average is relatively small.

Table 5.5: Q.19. How likely are you to do further learning in the future? (% of row total)						
	Very likely	Fairly likely	Not very likely	Not at all likely	Likely	Unlikely
Gender						
Male	58%	23%	12%	6%	81%	18%
Female	64%	23%	8%	4%	87%	12%
Age						
24 or less	59%	24%	11%	6%	83%	16%
25+	70%	20%	7%	4%	90%	10%
Ethnicity						
White	56%	26%	11%	7%	82%	18%
BME	73%	17%	7%	3%	90%	10%
Learning Difficulty						
Yes	54%	25%	10%	9%	79%	20%
No	62%	23%	10%	5%	85%	15%
Level of Study						
Level 2	59%	27%	7%	6%	86%	13%
Level 3	61%	22%	10%	5%	84%	16%
Previous Main Activity						
Solely Working	65%	22%	8%	4%	87%	13%
In Education	59%	23%	11%	6%	82%	17%
Other	57%	29%	10%	4%	85%	15%
Total	61%	23%	10%	5%	84%	15%
Base : All recipients of the ALG in 2006/7 (915)						
* Effective Base is too small (under 50) or less than 0.5% of total						
Source: ALG Recipients Survey 2008						

Notably, almost all (98 per cent) of Access to HE learners reported they were likely to do further learning in the future (figure 5.3), although as a qualification designed to prepare learners for entry into higher education this finding is not surprising. Learners enrolled on qualifications with a greater academic content (Access to HE, A Level and AS/A2 Level) are the most likely to consider further learning.

Figure 5.3: Q.19. How likely are you to do further learning in the future? (% saying likely)



ALG recipients currently enrolled at Level 2 and likely to do further learning at Level 3 were then asked how likely they are to apply for the ALG in the future, and over 80 per cent of learners stated this to be the case (table 5.6). The groups most likely to apply for an ALG again are females (86 per cent) and those who were previously working (88 per cent).

Table 5.6: Q.21. How likely are you to apply for an ALG in the future?					
(% of row total)					
	Very likely	Fairly likely	Not very likely	Not at all likely	Likely
Gender					
Male	48%	31%	15%	6%	79%
Female	61%	25%	12%	2%	86%
Age					
24 or less	54%	27%	16%	4%	81%
25+	*	*	*	*	*
Ethnicity					
White	50%	30%	15%	5%	80%
BME	*	*	*	*	*
Learning Difficulty					
Yes	*	*	*	*	*
No	53%	30%	12%	5%	83%
Level of Study					
Level 2	54%	28%	14%	4%	82%
Level 3	*	*	*	*	*
Previous Main Activity					
Solely Working	53%	35%	10%	2%	88%
In Education	54%	25%	15%	5%	79%
Other	*	*	*	*	*
Total	54%	28%	14%	4%	82%
Base : All recipients of the ALG doing Level 2, and likely to move onto Level 3 (153)					
* Effective Base is too small (under 50) or less than 0.5% of total					
Source: ALG Recipients Survey 2008					

Almost all the learners who have decided to continue learning had a positive experience during their current studying. Just 9 per cent of learners said that their experiences had no influence on their decision and there is very little variation of these views between the different groups of learners.

5.2.3 Achievements as a result of the ALG

Achievement rates of ALG recipients exceed other learner groups. Other outcomes include skills surrounding employment by completing their course.

The achievement rate (i.e. the proportion of all aims achieved or partially achieved) of ALG recipients is 81 per cent, and this exceeds the all learner average and the achievement rate of other learner groups.

Table 5.7: Achievement rates of ALG learner aims by level of aim (NVQ equivalent)
(% of aims achieved)

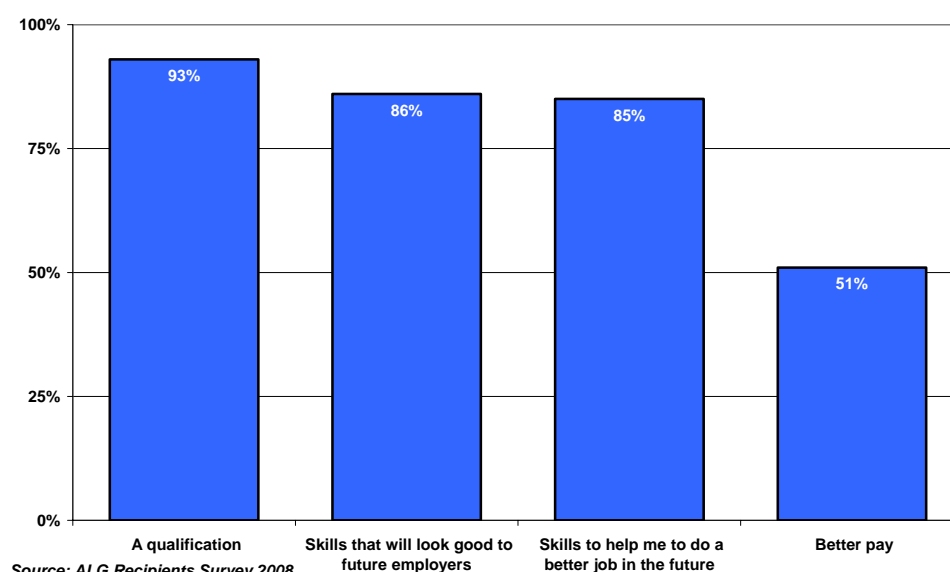
	ALG	Other Learner Support	No Learner Support	All Learners
Level 2	81%	73%	68%	70%
Level 3	81%	70%	67%	68%
All	81%	73%	68%	69%

* Number of aims achieved or partially achieved as % total aims (excluding continuing aims or awaiting results) (ILR field A35)
This table covers LSC funded active aims with guided learning hours of more the 450 (A10 ≠ 99, A_LIVE_B > 1 and A32>450)

Source: ILR (FE) 0607

Although the sample size in the ALG recipient survey is relatively small, by completing their course ALG recipients consider themselves to have developed their skills and attributes. Figure 5.4 shows that *a qualification*, *skills that will look good to future employers* and *skills to help me do a better job in the future* were cited by around nine in ten completers.

Figure 5.4: Q18. Which of the following do you think you have gained from doing this course? (% of total)



Source: ALG Recipients Survey 2008

6 Conclusions

The findings of this research into the impact of the ALG are that it has a positive impact, i.e. creates additional benefits in terms of:

- attracting people into learning;
- enabling learners to take up courses earlier than they would have otherwise;
- supporting learners in full time study;
- encouraging the retention of learners; and
- raising achievement levels.

The blue headings that follow stipulate the objectives of the evaluation of ALG and against each of these we present the main survey findings:

The effect of the ALG on recipients' decisions to participate in learning

Of learners who had heard of the ALG before deciding upon their course, around half said that it had affected their decision *a great deal* or *a fair amount*.

The impact of the ALG on learner choice in terms of qualification level/type/subject, mode of study and working patterns

One-third of learners decided to undertake a full qualification rather than just part modules/units.

Two in ten were influenced in their choice of the level of qualification they undertook.

Two in ten were influenced in their choice of subject.

To assess additionality in terms participation, retention and attainment

Participation: one in ten ALG recipients would not have gone ahead with their course were it not for the ALG (*scale additionality*), and 16 per cent of ALG recipients reported they had started their course earlier because of the support (*timing additionality*).

Retention: 15 per cent of recipients would have dropped out the course if the ALG had not been available (*scale additionality*), and retention rates of ALG recipients (88 per cent) exceed all learners (80 per cent).

Attainment: the ALG encouraged one-third of learners to undertake full-time rather than part-time learning therefore attaining their qualifications earlier (*timing additionality*), and achievement rates of ALG recipients (81 per cent) exceeds all learners (69 per cent).

The linkages that exist between the ALG and other forms of learner support

The ALG is often accompanied by or is a follow on from other forms of financial support. Sixty-one per cent previously received another form of grant or fund, primarily the EMA, help with travel costs, and hardship payments. ALG recipients are most likely to receive financial support towards the cost of childcare and travel costs at the same time as the ALG.

Appendix A

Questionnaire

**Understanding the Impact of Adult Learning Grants
for the Learning & Skills Council (LSC)
TELEPHONE SURVEY OF LEARNERS WHO RECEIVED ALG
FINAL Questionnaire (18 APRIL 2008)**

A. ASK PERSON WHO ANSWERS PHONE
Please can I speak to (CONTACT NAME)?

Respondent answers phone / Transferred to respondent	1	CONTINUE
Respondent not available now	2	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Respondent no longer lives at address – CONTACT DETAILS KNOWN	3	TAKE CONTACT DETAILS
Respondent no longer lives at address – CONTACT DETAILS UNKNOWN	4	CLOSE
Refusal	5	
Business number / fax number	6	
Unobtainable number	7	

ASK RESPONDENT

Good morning / afternoon / evening. My name is (...) from Ipsos MORI, an independent research organisation. We are doing research about people's views on learning and the Adult Learning Grant for the Learning and Skills Council. We would really like to get your views on this. It should only last around 15 minutes.

You should have received a letter about this in the last week.

REASSURANCES TO USE IF NECESSARY:

- Your details were obtained from the central record that the Learning and Skills Council keeps of all individuals who have applied for an Adult Learning Grant. When signing the declaration on the Application Form for this grant, you consented to be contacted for research purposes.
- Any information that you give us will be strictly confidential and will not be passed on to the Learning and Skills Council in any way that makes it possible to identify you personally.
- If you have any queries please call Naomi Barber or John Highton Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute on 0207 347 3000, or the Market Research Society free phone number 0500 396999.

Yes – continue	1	
Make appointment	2	MAKE APPOINTMENT
Refused	3	THANK & CLOSE

SCREENERS

ASK ALL WITH PROVIDER NAME IN SAMPLE

SCR1 **Firstly, can you confirm that you are currently attending or have recently attended <INSERT INSTITUTION>?**
a DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY

Yes	1	GO TO SCR3
No	2	GO TO SCR3
Don't know	3	GO TO SCR2

ASK SCR1b IF CODE 2 'NO' AT SCR1a

SCR1 **INTERVIEWER TAKE DOWN CORRECT PLACE**
b

(Open-ended)

ASK IF CODE 2 AT SCR1 OR IF PROVIDER NAME IS MISSING IN SAMPLE

SCR2 **According to our records, you were doing a course during 2006/2007. Do you remember taking part in this learning?**
DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY

Yes	1	GO TO SCR3
No – did not take part in any learning	2	THANK AND CLOSE
Don't know	3	

ASK ALL

SCR3 **Our record shows that you have received an Adult Learning Grant in 2006/07. Is this correct?"**
INTERVIEWER PROMPT: This is an allowance of £10, £20 or £30 per week paid to learners studying full-time to help with the costs of learning. The money is paid weekly into the learner's bank account.
DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY

Yes	1	GO TO SCR5
No	2	GO TO SCR4
Don't know	3	

ASK IF CODE 2 OR 3 AT SCR3

SCR4 **Did you receive any Adult Learning Grant payments during 2006/2007?**
A DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY

Yes	1	GO TO SCR5
No	2	THANK AND CLOSE
Don't know	3	

ASK IF CODE 1 AT SCR3 OR SCR4A AND AMOUNT IS NOT £10/20/30 PER WEEK ON SAMPLE.

SCR4 **How much was your weekly ALG payment? Was it £10, £20 or £30 per week?**

B SINGLE CODE ONLY

£10	1
£20	2
£30	3
Some other amount – WRITE IN (TO THE NEAREST POUND)	4
.....	
Don't know	5

ASK ALL

SCR5 **Which of the following best describes the qualification you were doing in 2006/07?**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE

Advance Award/Certificate/Diploma	1
Award/Certificate/Diploma	2
BTEC	3
City and Guilds	4
RSA	5
GNVQ	6
NVQ	7
A level	8
AS/A2 level	9
GCSE(s).....	10
Key skills.....	11
Access to HE	12
ONC/OND	13
Other (SPECIFY NAME & LEVEL OF QUALIFICATION)	14
Don't know	15

ASK IF MISSING FROM SAMPLE

Q25 **Can you say to which ethnic group you would say you belong?**
SINGLE CODE ONLY

White - British	1
White - Irish	2
White - any other White background	3
Black or Black British - African	4
Black or Black British - Caribbean	5
Black or Black British - any other Black background	6
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	7
Asian or Asian British - Indian	8
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	9
Asian or Asian British - any other Asian background	10
Mixed - White and Asian	11
Mixed - White and Black African	12
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	13
Mixed - any other Mixed background	14
Chinese	15
Any other, please specify	16
.....	
Refused	17

A. CURRENT AND PRIOR STATUS

ASK ALL

I'd now like to talk to you about your experiences of this learning and your views on how it worked for you.

Please concentrate on your experiences of this course in the rest of this interview even though you may have been involved with other programmes.

DP: PLEASE SHOW NAME OF QUALIFICATION (SCR5) ON SCREEN

ASK ALL

Q1 **How far have you got with this learning/qualification?**
READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY

Successfully completed your course/learning	1
Stopped your course/learning without completing, or	2
Still continuing with your course/learning	3
Other (Please Specify)	4
.....	
Don't know	5

ASK ALL

Q2

- a) What was your main work status before you started this course/learning?
b) And what is your main work status now?

PROMPT TO CODE. IF INVOLVED IN MULTIPLE ACTIVITIES, RECORD ACTIVITY THEY SPENT THE MOST TIME DOING. SINGLE CODE EACH

Full-time education without a job	1
Full-time education with a job	2
Part-time education without a job	3
Part-time education with a job	4
Full-time work	5
Part-time work	6
Unemployed and looking for work	7
Unemployed and not looking for work	8
Looking after the home or family/taking a holiday	9
Living/working abroad/travelling	10
Doing something else	11
Other (WRITE IN)	12
.....	
Don't know / Can't remember	13

B. CHOICE OF COURSE

ASK ALL

Q3

What were your main reasons for doing this learning/qualification? DO READ OUT.
MULTICODE OK.

To help you get a job	1
To develop your career	2
To change your career	3
To gain new skills.....	4
To help you stay in a job you might have lost if you hadn't studied.....	5
To get a pay rise	6
To get more satisfaction from your work.....	7
To start up your own or a family business	8
To help with work problems related to your health or a disability	9
Other (WRITE IN)	10
.....	
Don't know	11

ASK ALL

- Q4 **Before you started this course/learning, did you consider . . .**
a) doing something else other than studying?
b) doing a different course to the one we have been discussing?

SINGLE CODE EACH

Yes	1
No.....	2
Don't know	3

ASK IF CONSIDERED SOMETHING ELSE/DIFFERENT COURSE (CODE 1 AT Q4a OR Q4b)

- Q5 **And did financial considerations play a role in your decision to do the current course instead?**

SINGLE CODE ONLY.

Yes	1
No.....	2
Don't know	3

ASK ALL

- Q6 **Have you or will you pay any of the following for this course?**
READ OUT. MULTICODE OK. RANDOMISE

Course fees (these include fees for your tuition or for course materials).....	1
Registration fees (money that you pay before you start you course)	2
Exam fees (to cover the cost of an examination)	3
Other (WRITE IN)	4
.....	
Don't know	5
None	6

C. APPLYING FOR THE ALG

You mentioned earlier that you have received an Adult Learning Grant or ALG. I would now like to ask you some questions about this.

ASK ALL

Q7 Where or from whom did you first hear about ALG?

DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLECODE ONLY

Connexions Advisers	1
College careers guidance staff	2
Next Step/Adult IAG Service (Information, Advice & Guidance)	3
Teachers	4
Other staff at school	5
College/learning provider	6
Parents	7
Friends, brothers/sisters or other relatives	8
TV adverts	9
ALG posters/leaflets	10
Internet, websites	11
Work experience	12
Through hobbies and interests	13
Radio	14
Other (WRITE IN)	15
.....	
Don't know / Can't remember	

ASK ALL

Q8 **Did you find out about ALG before or after you decided to do this course?**
SINGLE CODE ONLY

Before	1
After	2
Don't know	3

ASK IF BEFORE (CODE 1 AT Q8)

Q9 **To what extent was your decision to do the course influenced by the fact you could apply for an ALG?**
READ OUT. REVERSE SCALE. SINGLECODE

A great deal	1
A fair amount	2
Not very much	3
Not at all	4
Don't know	5

ASK ALL

Q10 **Did the Adult Learning Grant enable you to start your course earlier?**
SINGLECODE

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

D. IMPACT OF ALG

ASK ALL

- Q11 If you had not received the Adult Learning Grant, would you have . . .
- a) Still gone ahead with your course?
 - b) Studied your course on a part-time basis instead?
 - c) Dropped out of your course (IF CODE 1/2/3/DK AT Q1: without completing? OR IF CODE 2 AT Q1 earlier?)

PROMPT TO CODE. SINGLE CODE EACH (a-c) ONLY.

Definitely	1
Probably	2
Probably not	3
Definitely not	4
Don't know	5

- Q12 Thinking about your <COURSE TITLE> course, did the opportunity to receive the ALG influence . . .

- a) Your decision to study the FULL qualification rather than just part modules/units
- b) Your choice on the level of the qualification (eg. Level 1, 2 or 3 etc)
- c) Your choice of what subject to study

READ OUT A-C. ROTATE. SINGLE CODE ONLY PER STATEMENT

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

ASK ALL

- Q13 Have you ever received the following grants/funds?

ASK FOR EACH YES AT CODES 2-6

Did you receive <INSERT FUND> at the same time as the ALG? YES, NO OR DON'T KNOW FOR EACH.

READ OUT. MULTICODE OK

Education Maintenance Allowance – EMA	1
Hardship payments – sometimes also known as Access Funds or Learner Support Funds	2
Financial support towards the cost of childcare	3
Help with travel costs to and from your place of study	4
Residential support	5
Career Development Loan	6
Other grants for learners (SPECIFY)	7
Don't know	8
None/nothing	9

ASK IF RECEIVED EMA (CODE 1 AT Q13)

Q14 **Were you getting the EMA (Education Maintenance Allowance) immediately prior to applying for the ALG (Adult Learner Grant)?**

SINGLECODE

Yes	1
No.....	2
Don't know	3

E. EARLY LEAVERS

ASK EARLY LEAVERS ONLY (IF CODE 2 AT Q1)

Q15 **Changing the subject slightly, why did you stop the <course> without completing it?**

DO NOT READ OUT - CODE ALL MENTIONED

I could not afford to continue/needed to get a job	1
The learning/qualification was not relevant to the job I want to do	2
My personal/domestic circumstances changed (e.g. moved house; illness; pregnancy; bereavement)	3
I only wanted to do part of the qualification anyway	4
I lost interest	5
I changed to a different course	6
I changed my mind about what I wanted to do ...	7
I was encouraged to give up by my employer	8
The quality of teaching, training or assessment was poor	9
I wasn't learning anything new	10
The learning/qualification was at a level too high for me	11
The learning/qualification was at a level too low for me	12
The pace of the learning /qualification was too fast for me	13
The pace of the learning/qualification was too slow for me	14
Other (WRITE IN)	15
.....	
Don't know / Can't remember	16

ASK EARLY LEAVERS ONLY (IF CODE 2 AT Q1)

Q16 **What would have enabled you to complete the course?**

DO NOT READ OUT - CODE ALL MENTIONED

More financial support generally	1
If ALG amount was higher	2
Better guidance at the time of choosing the framework	3
More support (transport, material etc.)	4
More time to train during working hours	5
More time to complete the course overall (duration)	6
More support from supervisor, line manager, employer	7
More support from your college	8
More support from your training provider	9
Better preparation for work while at school	10
Better training provider	11
A course more related to your job	12
The guarantee of a better job at the end	13
Other (WRITE IN)	14
.....	
Don't know / Can't remember	15

ASK EARLY LEAVERS ONLY (IF CODE 2 AT Q1)

Q17 **I am going to read out a series of statements. When you hear each one, please answer definitely yes, Probably yes, Probably not, or Definitely not.**

a) The need to earn more money played a part in my decision to leave

b) I would have left the course earlier without ALG payments

PROMPT TO CODE. SINGLE CODE ONLY.

Definitely yes.....	1
Probably yes	2
Probably not.....	3
Definitely not	4
Don't know	5

F. COMPLETERS

ASK COMPLETERS ONLY.

You mentioned that you have already completed this course. I'd like to ask you a couple of questions about what you got out of it

ASK IF CODE 1 AT Q1

Q18 Which of the following do you think you have gained from doing this course? **READ OUT-ROTATE. CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

SHOW IF CODE 1 AT Q1

A qualification	1
Skills that will look good to future employers	2
Skills to help me to do a better job in the future	3
Better pay	4

ASK IF NOT WORKING BEFORE STARTING COURSE

(IF CODE 1/3/7-10 AT Q2a)

A job	5
-------	---

ASK IF WORKING BEFORE COURSE AND WORKING CURRENTLY

(if CODE 2 OR 4 to 6 AT Q2a AND if CODE 2 OR 4 to 6 AT Q2b)

A promotion	6
	7

G. FUTURE INTENTIONS

ASK ALL

Q19 **How likely are you to do further learning in future?**
READ OUT. REVERSE SCALE. SINGLE CODE ONLY.

Very likely	1
Fairly likely	2
Not very likely	3
Not at all likely	4
Don't know	5

ASK IF LIKELY (CODE 1 OR 2 AT Q19)

Q20 **And to what extent is your intention to do further learning in the future influenced by your recent experience of doing this course?**

READ OUT. REVERSE SCALE. SINGLE CODE ONLY.

A great deal	1
A fair amount	2
Not very much	3
Not at all	4
Don't know	5

ASK IF CURRENTLY DOING LEVEL 2 (FROM SAMPLE) AND LIKELY TO DO FURTHER LEARNING AT LEVEL 3

Q21 **How likely are you to apply for an ALG in future?**

READ OUT. REVERSE SCALE. SINGLE CODE ONLY.

Very likely	1
Fairly likely	2
Not very likely	3
Not at all likely	4
Don't know	5

H. DEMOGRAPHICS

Finally, I'd like to ask some questions about you. This information will be used to analyse the survey findings only and will be reported in aggregate. REASSURE CONFIDENTIALITY.

ASK ALL

Q22 Which of the following best describes your housing arrangements?
READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Living in a property you own or in the process of buying	1
Living with your parents rent free	2
Living with your parents and paying rent	3
Paying rent to the council, a housing association or to a private landlord	4
Other (WRITE IN)	5
.....	
Don't know	6

ASK Q23 IF CODE 2, 4 - 6 AT Q2.

Q23 Could you please tell me your current annual income? PROMPT WITH BANDS.
SINGLE CODE ONLY.

Less than £10,000	1
£10,000 to £14,999	2
£15,000 to £19,999	3
£20,000 to £24,999	4
£25,000 to £29,999	5
£30,000 to £34,999	6
£35,000 to £39,999	7
£40,000 to £49,999	8
£50,000 to £59,999	9
£60,000 to £99,999	10
£100,000 or more	11
Rather not say	12

ASK IF ETHNICITY MISSING FROM SAMPLE

ASK IF DISABILITY MISSING FROM SAMPLE

Q26 **Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**
SINGLE CODE ONLY

Yes	1
No.....	2
Refused.....	3

ASK ALL

Q27 **Do you consider yourself to have a learning difficulty?**
SINGLE CODE ONLY

Yes	1
No.....	2
Refused.....	3

RECONTACT PERMISSION

ASK ALL

The Learning and Skills Council may be doing further research about post-16 education. Would it be OK for Ipsos MORI to contact you again in connection with future studies? CODE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING.

PROBE & CODE ONE OF FOLLOWING:

Yes	1
No	2

Appendix B

About us



Who we are

Experian

Experian is a global leader in providing information, analytical and marketing services to organisations and consumers to help manage the risk and reward of commercial and financial decisions.

Combining its unique information tools and deep understanding of individuals, markets and economies, Experian partners with organisations around the world to establish and strengthen customer relationships and provide their businesses with competitive advantage.

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